



Buzzwords ...

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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

What's in this issue ...

- * NZ honey not 'dumped' in Australia
- * Mixing sugar syrup
- * Branch and hobbyist news
- * Honey export statistics

Buzzwords No. 3, November 1988



"I can't start it, Dad...in fact, I can't even find the motor!"

THE AUSSIES SOUND OFF AGAIN!

An anti-dumping action taken by Australian honey packers against New Zealand sales in Sydney has been rejected, according to the August issue of *The Australasian Beekeeper*. The magazine still takes a swipe at New Zealand sales on the Sydney market, saying it is unfair that under CER New Zealand has free access to Australia, but exports of Australian honey across the Tasman are banned for quarantine reasons. In fact this isn't true. We will accept honey from any state that is free of EFB, if the honey is heated to 80° C for 30 minutes or 60° C for 8 hours.

OH CANADA!

Ontario beekeepers enjoy a government-sponsored crop insurance programme that works like this. An average crop is assessed for each beekeeper (based on past seasons), and a payout of \$C1.54/kg is made when the crop is less than 70% of that average. So if beekeepers with an assessed crop of, say, 30 kg per hive had a total crop failure, they would receive \$C1.54/kg on 70% of 30 kg (21 kg x \$C1.54 or \$C32.34 per hive).

This costs the beekeeper \$C1.80 per hive per year, as the government pays half the premiums.

Other programmes give compensation for bear damage, and a subsidy per hive ranging from \$C4.90 to \$C10.26.

SYRUP FEEDING

There's a lot of sugar syrup being pumped into hives at the moment, so I thought it was time to review a few facts about sugar feeding. What's the best concentration to feed to hives in the orchard? How much honey do you get per litre of syrup? And what's the difference between 2:1 and 67% syrup?

It's generally reckoned that to put stores onto a colony (especially in autumn), strong syrup (like 2:1) should be used. To stimulate brood-rearing (such as in spring), a weaker syrup is best. Remember also that Mark Goodwin's trials on syrup feeding and kiwifruit pollen collection were done with 1:1 syrup (a weaker solution).

These recommendations certainly tie up with my observations in kiwifruit orchards last season. Hives that were being fed liquid sugar from the Auckland refinery (which at 2:1 is as strong a solution as you can get) were really suffering. The syrup was just being put all through the brood nest, clogging it up and cutting down the queen's laying rate. That's bad news for pollination, and for the colony going onto a honey flow over Christmas.

Let's look at how to work out concentrations, and what amount of stores different strength solutions will provide. There's a lot of mumbo-jumbo spoken about syrup concentration, with people rattling off 2:1 by weight or 1:1 by volume, and 1:1 by weight or 1:2 by volume. It's easiest to express concentration as a ratio by weight, or as a % solution.

To work out the ratio use these formulae:

ratio by weight = sugar/water

20 kg of sugar and 10 kg of water (or 10 litres) = 20/10 or 2/1, a ratio of 2:1 by weight.

To work out the % solution use this:

% solution = sugar / (sugar + water) x 100

$$= 20 / (20 + 10) \times 100$$

$$= 20 / 30 \times 100$$

$$= 67\%$$

The most concentrated syrup you can get at 17°C is 67% or 2:1 by weight. The fine liquid sugar from the Auckland refinery is at this strength, and it doesn't seem to granulate if kept in clean containers.

When you mix it up yourself things are a little less precise, and although all the sugar in a 67% solution is dissolved at 17°C, there is a risk of sugar granulating and sitting on the bottom of the tank if the temperature drops. To avoid this waste use a 64% solution, or 18 kg of sugar to 10 litres of water. At this concentration the temperature has to drop below 0°C before there is any risk of granulation.

Now let's look at the relationship between sugar used, volume

of syrup and weight of stores put on.

Sugar + Water = Syrup (Concentration) → Stores

1.0 kg + 1.0 litres	= 1.6 litres	1:1 or 50%	→	1.0 kg
1.0 kg + 0.67 litres	= 1.27 litres	1.5:1 or 60%	→	1.12 kg
1.0 kg + 0.5 litres	= 1.1 litres	2:1 or 67%	→	1.2 kg

So for putting stores onto a colony (eg in autumn), using concentrated syrup will give you 20% better results than the same amount of sugar in a 50% mix.

Remember that to maximize pollen collection in kiwifruit orchards, you should use 50% or 1:1 syrup. To convert 67% syrup to 50% you should mix 22 litres of concentrated syrup with 10 litres of water. This will give you 32 litres of 50% syrup - the right strength for feeding in orchards.

I should say that this formula has been worked out from some conversion tables, and I take no responsibility for huge quantities of mead produced this Christmas. Seriously though, I'd be interested in hearing your comments on the subject of syrup feeding.

FILING BUZZWORDS

One reader has suggested that beekeepers file *Buzzwords* in a ringbinder for future reference. You could use a highlighter pen to mark any items you might want to look back on.



POLLINATION

Doing pollination this year? Then you're obliged to furnish MAF with a list of all your pollination contracts. This is important in case of disease outbreaks while hives are in the orchard, and is a requirement under the Apiaries Act.

We know that contracts and numbers are changing up until the last minute, so to make things easier we're only asking for a breakdown of the orchards being serviced (name and road), and the total number of hives you're putting in.

And remember, to be useful the information must reach us before the hives go in.

BUZZING BRANCHES

What makes a successful NBA branch? Well, I've observed quite a number of branches over the years, ranging from the good to the bad (and the ugly).

One of the hardest things for budding branches to come by is ideas for successful activities. Events that work well really put new life into a group, while even keen branches get a bit disillusioned after a few flops.

This newsletter can be a vehicle for sharing ideas. Tell me what's worked for your branch, and why. What have you done that other branches shouldn't copy, and why not?

Did you get 70 people to your last field day? Hawkes Bay branch did. They had a good collection of items, from trade displays to a gadget competition, and from a raffle to "serious" talks. They even had a walking work of knitted bee art and a honey fudge stall. Most importantly, the local paper had been wised up, and had a photographer along to be stung.

The Bay of Plenty and Waikato branches have an annual golf tournament, at a rustic rural course complete with publicouse. Golfing ability is a disadvantage (or at least that's my excuse), and the teams compete for a round wooden seat with central hole, of dubious value and history.

Ideas for speakers for evening meetings or field days: someone from Telecom to talk on RTs, cordless phones and the like; a cop (oops, MOT officer) to talk about the load code and load security; a pharmacist or doctor to talk about sting remedies and first aid for adverse reactions; how about a trained psychologist or counsellor to discuss dealing with stress. Back aches, ACC, IRD, GST, DoC ... the list goes on.

SOUTHLAND FIELD DAY

Now here's some advance planning that should make other branches green with envy!

The Southland branch are having their annual field day on 4 February 1989, at Lees Apiaries in Balfour.

HONEY EXPORTS

For the period 1 January-30 September 1988:

Type	Quantity	Average value	Principal destinations
	(tonnes)	(\$/kg fob)	
Retail packs	367	\$3.38	Australia, Switzerland, Singapore
Bulk honey	915	\$1.78	FRG, Japan, UK
Honeydew	120	\$2.60	FRG, Japan
Comb honey	224	\$6.43	UK, Japan, Saudi Arabia
Beeswax	48	\$4.26	FRG, UK, Netherlands

NEW FAX

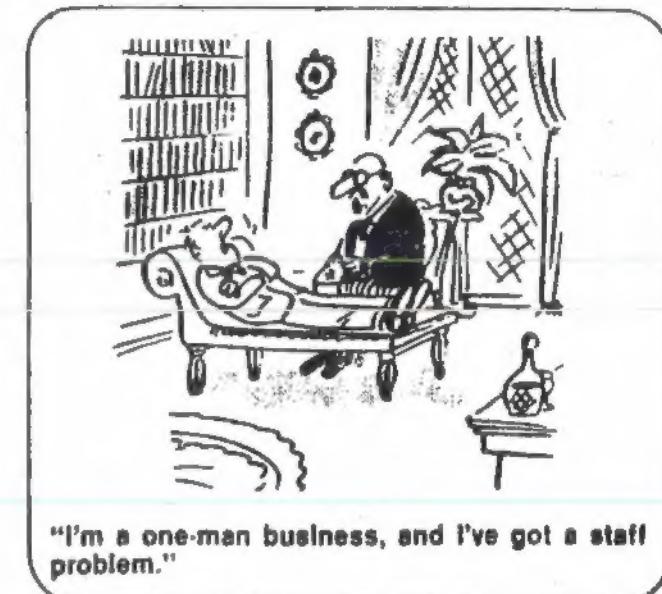
Tauranga MAF has a new fax number, (075) 88 429.

BAY OF PLENTY HOBBYISTS

Anew group is being formed in the Bay of Plenty to encourage domestic beekeepers. The club will be a forum for hobbyists to get together and learn about beekeeping, swap ideas and generally have a good time.

The club kicks off with a field day on Sunday 13 November, starting at 2 pm. The venue will be the apiary building (H1) at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic. The programme will be interesting and varied, and includes equipment displays, a demonstration of the Nicot queen rearing system, talks on bee management, book sales, a raffle, and so on. Make a note in your diary to be there!

For further details contact George Floyd on (075) 440 698.



INSPECTION DAYS

Nelson and Marlborough beekeepers have been doing their bit to keep AFB levels down. NBA members in both areas recently took part in diseaseathons (or should we call them "inspection bees"?).

The days were coordinated by Dave Gruuber of MAF's Blenheim office, and proved to be very worthwhile both for getting hives inspected and for getting the branch members working together.

In Nelson 17 teams inspected a total of 154 apiaries and 503 hives, and 15 sites (19.7%) and 29 hives (5.7%) were found to be infected with AFB. The disease was in two main pockets (10 hives infected out of 19 in one case), with the rest pretty well scattered.

In Marlborough nine teams looked at 103 apiaries and 424 hives - 6 apiaries (5.8%) and 8 hives (1.8%) were infected.

I know personally from Marlborough's 1987 diseaseathon that these days are excellent value. It's good to get commercial and hobbyist beekeepers working together and learning from each other (I think that in some cases the commercial members are surprised at the lack of disease in hobbyist hives!).

Congratulations to the branches that have taken part.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

Yes it's swarming time again, and MAF offices get besieged by irate MOPs (members of the public) who "want something done about it".

So if you want to collect swarms, do yourself and MAF a favour. Leave your name and phone number(s) at your nearest MAF office. You might like to do the same at your county or city council office too.

AND THE WEATHER THEORY FOR TODAY IS ...

Temperatures went off the charts, crops failed, 75 people in the US alone died from extreme weather conditions. News items and reports discussed the beginning of a new climatic period.

Was this all due to the greenhouse effect? No, I was describing a cold spell in 1977, and the reports talked of the beginning of a new ice age.

And do you remember El Nino - the climatic aberration that was blamed for everything from droughts to floods? What's going on?

You can't blame climatologists for all the confusion, or say that the greenhouse effect isn't real. It's just that there's a danger of valid scientific theories becoming hobby horses.

Climatic changes are very slow, and short-term changes in weather don't support or refute them.

So I'm sorry, you can't blame your poor honey crop, or the blistering paint on the house, onto the greenhouse effect.

RESEARCH IN THE DEEP SOUTH

Beekeeping research is going on down in the south. MAF has an apicultural research unit at Invermay, south of Dunedin, made up of Stephen Odgen and Ron van Toor.

The current research programme is looking at high country beekeeping, especially overcoming pollen deficiencies and the effect of honey bees on pollination of lotus and clovers. Controlling the Mellitiphis mite with fluvalinate is also on the agenda.

GO, BEE, GO

"Bee Go" is available here for use as a bee repellent, as an alternative to benzaldehyde. "Bee Go" is butyric anhydride, a substance which is approved in countries like Canada for taking off honey because it creates no significant residue problems.

The main thing against "Bee Go" is its unpleasant smell. (The residues of butyric anhydride quickly change to butyric acid, the noticeable component of rancid butter.)

ADVICE FOR BEEKEEPERS' BACKS

The magazine *Speedy Bee* recently ran an article containing 38 pieces of advice for beekeepers. Actually it was entitled "38 pieces of advice for low-back problems", but that's the same thing isn't it?

I'll report these in *Buzzwords* over the next few issues as space permits.

Sitting advice

1. At home or work, sit in a straight chair with a firm back.
2. Sit so that your knees are higher than your hips. To do this you may need a small footstool.
3. Avoid sitting in swivel chairs and chairs on rollers.
4. Do not sit in overstuffed chairs or sofas.
5. Never sit in the same position for prolonged periods. Get up and move around.

Driving advice

6. Push the front seat of your car forward so your knees will be higher than your hips. This will reduce the strain on back and shoulder muscles.
7. Always fasten your seat belt.
8. A headrest may be helpful.

And then there was the Browned-off Bay of Plenty beekeeper who was still trying to get a discount off a bill he hadn't yet paid. The account was for the services of a debt-collecting agency!

BUZZWORDS IS ...

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